

Message Text

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71

ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 68

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, AU

SUBJECT: SOVIET PARLIAMENTARIANS VISIT AUSTRIA

1. SUMMARY: DELEGATION OF SOVIET PARLIAMENTARIANS HEADED BY ALEKSY SHITIKOV, CHAIRMAN OF SUPREMEM SOVIET COUNCIL, ENDED NINE-DAY VISIT ON OCTOBER 1. GROUP WAS EXPOSED TO TRADITIONAL AUSTRIAN HOSPITALITY, ITS LACKLUSTER COMPOSITION GENERATED NO SERIOUS EXCHANGES OF VIEWS, AND VIRTUALLY NO PUBLICITY. IN WAKE OF ARAB TERRORIST ATTACK, CHANCELLOR KREISKY REITERATED AUSTRIA'S DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE GRANTING ASYLUM AND TRANSIT RIGHT TO POLITICAL EMIGRANTS. END SUMMARY

2. SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TOURED AUSTRIA FROM SEPTEMBER 23 TO OCTOBER 1 IN RETURN FOR AUSTRIAN MP GROUP VISIT TO USSR LAST SPRING. ITINERARY PLACED MAJOR EMPHASIS ON CEREMONIAL AND SIGHTSEEING ACTIVITIES WITH STOPS IN TYROL, SALZBURG, UPPER AUSTRIA, AND THE SOVIET "MUST" OF LAYING WREATH AT FORMER MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP. ON OFFICIAL SIDE, PRESIDENT JONAS RECEIVED DELEGATION AND AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS LED BY PRESIDENT BENYA HAD EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH SOVIETS. BENYA TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOVIET MPS LACKED STATURE, LIMITED THEMSELVES TO STEROTYPED REMARKS BUT, IN CONTRAST TO EARLIER DELEGATIONS, AVOIDED POLEMICAL OR OTHER CRITICAL UTTERANCES. NEVER-

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THELESS, BENYA FELT VISIT WAS WORTHWHILE FROM AUSTRIAN POINT OF VIEW

IN TERMS OF FOSTERING INCREASED EASTERN TRAVEL TO WEST. THIS POINT NOT LOST ON SOVIET DELEGATION WHEN SHITIKOV REMARKED THAT HIS GROUP WAS VERY SATISFIED WITH VISIT WHICH PROVIDED USEFUL CONTACTS WITH AUSTRIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS THAT WILL LEAD TO BETTER UNDERSTANDIN.

3. AT LUNCHEON ON SEPTEMBER 29, THUS ONLY HOURS AFTER ARAB TERRORISTS HAD LEFT AUSTRIA WITH GOA PROMISE TO TERMINATE FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE TO JEWISH EMIGRE GROUPS, INCLUDING CLOSING OF SCHOENAU TRANSIT POINT, CHANCELLOR KREISKY TAILORED REMARKS TO SOVIET GUESTS BY STATING THAT "CERTAIN MINOR CHANGES WILL BE MADE FOR INTERNAL SECURITY

REASONS, BUT THERE WILL BE NO BASIC CHANGE IN OUR HUMANITARIAN ATTITUDE. AUSTRIA WILL CONTINUE TO GRANT ASYLUM TO ANY PERSON WHO FEELS PERSECUTED AND OFFER TRANSIT OPPORTUNITY TO ANYONE WISHING TO CROSS THIS COUNTRY ON THE WAY TO ANY OTHER COUNTRY". COINCIDENCE OF TERRORIST INCIDENT DURING SOVIET DELEGATION'S SOJOURN IN VIENNA WAS EMBARRASSING TO VISITORS. ONE SOVIET MP REMARKED TO EMBOFF AT USSR EMBASSY RECEPTION THAT ONLY TWO THINGS WENT WRONG -- TOO MUCH RAIN AND "ARAB TERRORISTS FOOLISHNESS". HUMES

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